

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 07349 210742Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 OMB-01 IO-14 DHA-05 /090 W

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R 210655Z OCT 77

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1584

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

UNCLAS CANBERRA 7349

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, ID, AS

SUBJ: AUSTRALIA AND EAST TIMOR

1. IN RESPONSE TO WHAT IS ASSUMED TO HAVE BEEN A STAGED QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, AUSTRALIAN FONMIN PEACOCK GAVE WHAT IS ACCEPTED AS A DEFINITIVE STATEMENT ON AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA IN LIGHT OF THE EAST TIMOR AFFAIR. IT WAS POSITIVE, FRIENDLY, AND STRAIGHTFORWARD, THE ESSENCE HAVING BEEN IN THE PENULTIMATE SENTENCE: "I WOULD REAFFIRM THE STRENGTH AND THE SOUNDNESS OF OUR RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA AND EXPRESS MY CONFIDENCE THAT IT IS A RELATIONSHIP THAT IS DESTINED TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP RATHER THAN TO WITHER AWAY OR BE DIMANTLED
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 CANBER 07349 210742Z

MERELY BECAUSE OF DISAGREEMENT OVER A SINGLE ISSUE."

2. FULL TEXT OF QUESTION AND ANSWER FOLLOWS:

MR. KEVIN CAIRNS: "MY QUESTION IS DIRECTED TO THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS. WITHOUT IN ANY WAY ATTEMPTING TO DOWNGRADE AUSTRALIA'S CONCERN WITH HUMAN RIGHTS,

CAN HE GUARANTEE THAT RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE DICTATED ADVERSELY BY ANY CAMPAIGN CONDUCTED IN AUSTRALIA IN RELATION TO EAST TIMOR?"

MR. PEACOCK: "FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO ASSERT THAT DESPITE EVERYTHING THAT HAS BEEN SAID ON THIS SUBJECT RAISED BY THE HONOURABLE MEMBER AND EVERY DEVELOPMENT THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE, AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA HAVE REMAINED FUNDAMENTALLY SOUND. WE HAVE SPOKEN IN THE PLAINEST LANGUAGE OF THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN-INDONESIAN RELATIONSHIP. WE HAVE DESCRIBED THE NEED TO SUSTAIN AND CULTIVATE THIS RELATIONSHIP, HAVING BECOME AFTER THREE DECADES WHAT MIGHT BE DESCRIBED AS A CONSTANT FACTOR IN OUR FOREIGN POLICY. WE HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT REGARDS THIS RELATIONSHIP AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND SUBSTANTIAL STRANDS IN THE WHOLE COMPLEX WEB OF AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS. AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH INDONESIA IS A MATTER, I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT, ON WHICH ALL PARTIES SHOULD AGREE. I DO NOT THINK ANYONE WHO MAKES A RATIONAL STUDY OF AUSTRALIA'S ON-GOING CONTACTS AND EXCHANGES WITH INDONESIA COULD JUSTIFIABLY DENY THAT THE RELATIONSHIP IS EXTREMELY VIABLE, DYNAMIC AND EXPANDING. LOOKING BEYOND THE ILL-ADVISED APPEALS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE BY A VOCAL MINORITY EITHER TO BREAK OFF OR AT LEAST GREATLY REDUCE THE SCOPE OF THE RELATIONSHIP, THE EXTENSIVE RANGE

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PAGE 03 CANBER 07349 210742Z

OF ACTIVITIES OVER WHICH WE HAVE BUILT UP FLOURISHING CONTACTS WITH INDONESIA IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE SECTORS ARE LIVING EVIDENCE OF THE HEALTH OF THE RELATIONSHIP. IN SUMMARY, THEREFORE, I WOULD REAFFIRM THE STRENGTH AND THE SOUNDNESS OF OUR RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA AND EXPRESS MY CONFIDENCE THAT IT IS A RELATIONSHIP THAT IS DESTINED TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP RATHER THAN TO WITHER AWAY OR BE DISMANTLED MERELY BECAUSE OF DISAGREEMENT OVER A SINGLE ISSUE. THERE HAS BEEN NO TURNING AWAY FROM THIS RELATIONSHIP IN THE PAST TWO YEARS AND THERE SHOULD BE NO TURNING AWAY FROM IT IN THE FUTURE."

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Sent Date: 21-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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